

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

COUNTY OF SAN BERNARDINO

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Lead Warning Issued Lead is Highly Toxic in Children

San Bernardino. In 2008, the County of San Bernardino ranked 5th among Counties in California in the number of lead poisoning cases reported among children under age 6. "There were 78 new cases of lead poisoning reported in the County in 2009 indicating that the problem continues to exist," stated Maxwell Ohikhuare, M.D., San Bernardino County Health Officer.

Lead affects many important body systems, and can damage the brain, nerves, red blood cells, kidneys, and reproductive systems. Lead can also cause high blood pressure, miscarriage, and other health problems. It can easily cross the placenta in pregnant women and can harm the fetus. Lead is more dangerous for children under the age of six. Their brains and nervous systems are still forming. Children who are exposed to lead may have problems learning and paying attention. Damage from lead exposure can be permanent.

Lead is a heavy metal that has been used in manufacturing, paint, and other products for many years. It can also be found in certain home remedies, imported pottery, candy, spices and cosmetics.

The signs and symptoms of lead poisoning are often vague and can easily be confused with symptoms of other conditions. Those poisoned by lead may have few or no symptoms. The main treatment for lead poisoning is to remove the source of lead.

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The only way to know if there is lead in your body is to have a blood lead test. Children should be tested at 1 and at 2 years of age. If not, testing should occur at least once by the age of 6. Ask your doctor for a lead test at your child's next physical exam.

Contact the County of San Bernardino Department of Public Health, Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program at 1-800-722-3777, to help you and your health care provider find more information about lead poisoning.

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